

# Residential

## Changes to Energy Code Requirements for Group R Occupancies



## Energy Code UPDATE

February 27, 2002

In response to the energy crisis last year and based on the wider availability of more energy-efficient windows, the Washington State Building Code Council (WSBCC) voted in May 2001 to enter rulemaking to revise the Washington State Energy Code (WSEC). Proposed revisions were published at the end of July and public hearings were held in September and October 2001.

On November 9, 2001, the WSBCC adopted revisions to the WSEC. These revisions are effective statewide on July 1, 2002.

### Summary of Changes Effective Statewide July 1, 2002

The revisions are the most significant changes to the residential Energy Code requirements since 1991. For the residential building envelope, the prescriptive options now have the same requirements for all space heating system types (electric resistance, gas, oil, heat pump). Here are the requirements for the reference case for all space heating system types:

- window U-factors: U-0.40 max.
- roof insulation: R-38 min.
- wall insulation: R-21 min.
- floor insulation: R-30 min.

Multifamily projects and the guest room portions of hotel/motels that have a glazing area that is more than 15 percent of the floor area will need to use the Target UA or annual energy analysis options to show compliance.

Regarding window performance, there are many products with U-factors below 0.40:

- It is reported that the majority of R-1 occupancy buildings constructed in Seattle participate in the Seattle City Light incentive program which specifies a maximum U-factor of 0.35. Please contact Ken Katayama at Seattle City Light at (206) 684-4217 for more information.
- In addition, more than 60 percent of the residential windows sold in the Northwest are "Energy Star," which requires a U-factor of 0.35 or below, according to those who track window sales for that program.

For residential mechanical systems, the requirements are more consistent with those for nonresidential systems. This should result in less confusion for designers, contractors, and equipment distributors.

### Vesting

If you submit an application on July 1, 2002 or later, it will be subject to residential requirements in the 2001 Washington State Energy Code.

If you want the project to be subject to the residential requirements in the 2000 Washington State Energy Code, then you must submit the building permit application NO LATER THAN June 30, 2002 (actually by June 28, 2002, as that is the last business day before July 1). If you will not be submitting a building permit application by June 30, then you need to be designing to the 2001 Washington State Energy Code.

### For Additional Information

For further information, visit the Washington State Building Code Council (WSBCC) website at [www.sbcc.wa.gov](http://www.sbcc.wa.gov) or contact Krista Braaksma (WSBCC staff) in Olympia at (360) 725-2964.

